

I claim:

1. A lower back stretching apparatus, comprising:

a padded, waist-high bench comprising:

a horizontal forward portion adapted to support a  
user's prone upper torso;

a pivotable rearward portion adapted to support a  
user's legs;

a crank mechanism interconnecting the forward  
portion and the rearward portion, said crank  
mechanism adapted to pivot the rearward  
portion from a zero degree horizontal position  
through a forty-five degree downward and  
rearward tilted position.

2. A stretching apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the forward portion is comprised of:

a generally flat, rectangular, horizontal, padded element having an upper surface, an opposite lower surface, a front end, a rear end, and two opposite sides interconnecting the front end with the rear end, said front end and rear end defining a front portion longitudinal axis;

four vertical support legs attached to the padded element lower surface, two of which vertical legs are front legs attached near to the element front end, one each near to each opposite side, and two of which vertical legs are rear legs attached near to the element rear end, one each near to each opposite side.

3. A stretching apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein the rearward portion is comprised of:

a generally flat, rectangular, horizontal, padded element having an upper surface, an opposite lower surface, a front end, a rear end, and two opposite sides interconnecting the front end with the rear end, said front end and rear end defining a rearward portion longitudinal axis;

two leg holders mounted on the rearward portion element upper surface near to the rearward portion rear end, said holders adapted to removably grip a pair of user legs during a stretching procedure;

an elongated, hollow support bar attached longitudinally to the rearward portion lower surface, said support bar having a longitudinal axis parallel to the longitudinal axis of the rearward portion, said support bar having a row of apertures along a bar side.

4. A stretching apparatus as recited in claim 3, wherein the crank mechanism is comprised of:

a support cross-bar attached to the two rear support legs of the forward portion;

an elongated crank lever pivotally attached to the support cross-bar, said crank lever comprising:

a forward portion in front of the support cross-bar, said crank lever forward portion terminating in a Y-shaped element having two element ends, each said element end terminating in a hand grip positioned to the forward portion padded element sides;

a rearward portion to the rear of the support cross-bar, said crank lever rearward portion terminating in a U-shaped element having apertures formed along its sides, said U-shaped element adapted to fit about the rearward portion support bar, wherein the U-shaped apertures are aligned with the support bar apertures;

a center section rotatably attached to the support cross-bar;

an elongated removable pin adapted for joining the U-shaped element and the support bar together, said elongated pin adapted for removable attachment through the U-shaped element apertures and support bar apertures;

a damper piston interconnecting the forward portion rear end with the crank mechanism rearward portion.

5. A stretching apparatus as recited in claim 4, wherein:

said vertical support legs are vertically adjustable.

6. A stretching apparatus as recited in claim 5, wherein:

said leg holders are adjustable along an axis perpendicular to a rearward portion padded element upper surface plane;

wherein a spring loaded button protruding through a select hole formed in a vertical telescoping support bar enables the leg holders to be adjusted closer or farther from the padded element upper surface.

7. A stretching apparatus as recited in claim 6, further comprising:

a spring-loaded, pivotable vertical locking bar attached to the forward portion padded element lower surface and adapted for engagement with the crank mechanism crank lever forward portion, said locking bar is adapted to hold the crank lever in position wherein the rearward portion is in a full horizontal position;

a holder mounted on the crank lever adapted for removably seating the locking bar in place;

a second holder attached to the forward portion padded element lower surface adapted for engaging the spring-loaded locking bar.

8. A stretching apparatus as recited in claim 7, further comprising:

a hook element rotatably attached to each rear support leg;

a laterally protruding bar attached to each side of the crank mechanism forward portion near to the cross bar, each laterally protruding bar terminating in a

half-ring element;

wherein each hook element is adapted to engage a half-ring element.

9. A stretching apparatus as recited in claim 8, further comprising:

a plurality of bottom prongs on the locking bar adapted to engage said crank lever holder and said second holder.